

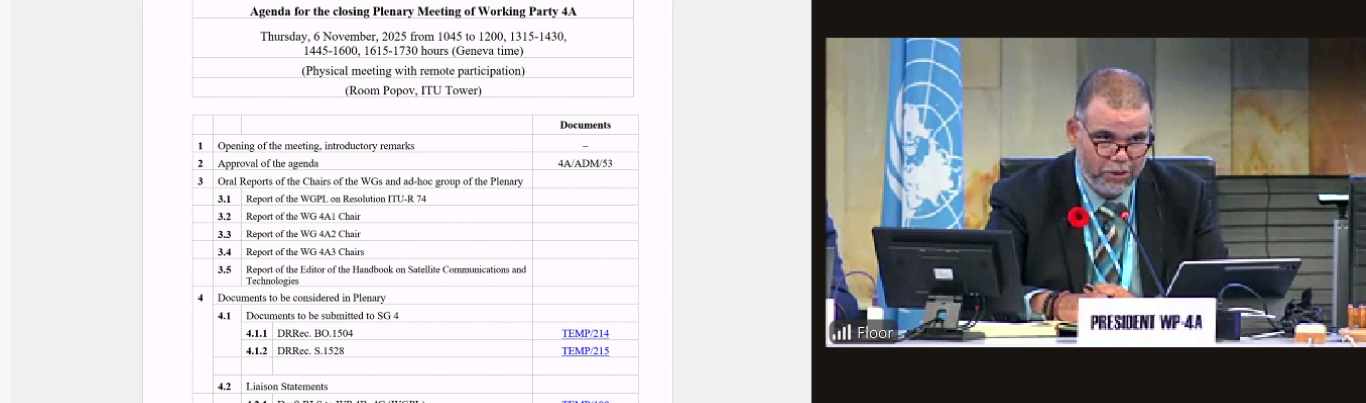
IAFI News

WTDC-25: Setting the Global Digital Agenda



The World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25) is taking place for two weeks, from 17 to 28 November 2025, in Baku, Azerbaijan. The conference was hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan under the theme: "Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future." The WTDC is a key conference hosted by the ITU-D every four years, responsible for setting the development agenda for the next four years (2026-2029), focusing on advancing digital connectivity, fostering innovation, and shaping policies for a more inclusive digital future. Bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, and technology experts, the WTDC serves as a catalyst for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and strategic decision-making in the telecommunications sector. Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Hon'ble Minister of State participated as Head of Indian Delegation, along with Shri Sriharan Madhusudhanan, Ambassador of India at Baku and many others joined the conference. Shri Bharat Bhatia, President, IAFI participated in the meeting physically and many others joined virtually. The first week of WTDC-25 in Baku focused on high-level strategy and initial technical discussions to set the course for global digital development. The High-Level Segment was held on 17 and 18 November 2025. This segment provided a special platform for high-ranking officials, mostly ministers or deputy ministers, from ITU Member States to express their views on emerging trends and matters of strategic importance to the development of the telecommunication and information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

Successful completion of the Working Party – 4A Meeting



The 5th Meeting of ITU-R Working Party 4A (WP 4A) was successfully held from October 27 to November 6, 2025, in Geneva, Switzerland. WP 4A manages the efficient orbit/spectrum utilization for the Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) and Broadcasting-Satellite Service (BSS). Shri Bharat Bhatia, President, IAFI, physically led the Indian delegation, alongwith with numerous other IAFI members joining the proceedings physically as well as virtually. The meeting achieved a record level of participation, deliberating on 258 documents, the highest number of contributions received since the formation of WP 4A. The agenda was heavily focused on preparatory work for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 (WRC-27). Two specific WRC-27 agenda items garnered the most intense focus; (a) WRC-27 Agenda Item 1.2 (Small Earth Station Antennas) - This item, concerning regulatory provisions for small earth station antennas operating in the 13.75-14.0 GHz band, drew the highest level of engagement with 30 dedicated contributions. The high attention underscores the industry's critical need for clear, harmonized international rules to support the widespread deployment of ubiquitous, small-terminal satellite systems (b) Agenda Item 1.5 (Unauthorized Non-GSO Uplinks) - Discussions regarding unauthorized non-GSO FSS/MSS uplink operations necessitated multiple extra sessions. This reflects the paramount importance members place on maintaining the integrity and compliance of satellite operations. In addition, extensive deliberation was also held on Agenda Items 1.1, 1.3, and 1.4. Similarly, despite numerous dedicated sessions, WRC-27 Agenda Item 7 remained a point of high controversy, highlighting the ongoing challenges in achieving consensus on various crucial regulatory and technical issues. The meeting concluded with substantial achievements, marking significant progress on key preparatory agenda items and demonstrating the global satellite community's heightened focus on future spectrum sharing and operational integrity ahead of WRC-27.

IAFI submitted comments on TRAI consultation paper regarding IMT spectrum auction



The ITU-APT Foundation of India (IAFI) submitted its response to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Consultation Paper on the auction of radio frequency spectrum for 4G/5G/6G. IAFI has urged TRAI to modernize its approach by moving away from high auction reserve prices that hinder network expansion and instead adopting forward-looking reforms: eliminating or minimizing reserve prices, implementing revenue-sharing and use-based payment models, and directly assigning spectrum for private, captive, and strategic uses. The note emphasizes that spectrum should be treated as a public good and critical enabler of societal and economic progress rather than a short-term revenue source, advocating for policies that strengthen open access, affordable connectivity, and inclusive national growth. By embracing these principles, TRAI and the Government of India can position the country to lead in next-generation wireless technologies, accelerate digital transformation, and foster a more dynamic, innovative, and inclusive telecommunications ecosystem. In detailed comments/suggestions, IAFI suggested to - (a) align the Reserve price with the current demand and market valuation and recommended ZERO reserve price for all frequency bands, (b) move away from the current Simultaneous Multiple Round Auction (SMRA) to a more modern, package-centric format like the Combinatorial Clock Auction (CCA), complemented by procedural reforms (c) inclusion of the 600 MHz band (612-652 MHz / 663-703 MHz) in this round, aligned with the APT 600 MHz Band Plan (3GPP Band n105) (d) IMT in the upper 6GHz band and its timely auction (e) linking the future 7 -8 GHz spectrum likely to be allocated for 6G at WRC-27 with upper 6GHz to provide up to 4 contiguous Blocks of 400 MHz each to meet the future needs ultra broadband and (f) supported the L Band (1427-1518 MHz) for Supplemental Uplink (SUL) in 5G network.

SATRC-26



The 26th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC-26) was held virtually from November 5 to 7, 2025, in Islamabad, Pakistan. Organized by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and hosted by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the event drew 121 participants, including representatives from 12 Member States and 7 Affiliate Members. IAFI and all Indian delegates participated in the meeting virtually. Delegates addressed key policy and regulatory issues affecting SATRC countries, culminating in the approval of the outcomes of SATRC Action Plan Phase IX and the adoption of the new SATRC Action Plan Phase X. To facilitate the development of the telecom and ICT sector in South Asia, SATRC-26 incorporated special interactive sessions, including a Regulators' Roundtable, an Industry-Regulator Dialogue, and Sharing Regulatory Experiences Sessions. The Regulators' Roundtable was an exclusive forum for Heads of Regulators to strategize on critical regulatory issues requiring regional collaboration, both within the SATRC Member countries and across the broader Asia-Pacific region. The event was inaugurated by Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI, in his capacity as the outgoing Chair of SATRC-25. Dr. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General, APT, delivered the welcome address and officially announced Major General (R) Hafeezur Rehman, Chairman, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, as the new SATRC-26 Chair. Next meeting of the SATRC (SATRC-27) will be held at Colombo, Sri Lanka and exact dates will be announced in due course.

BSNL's Strategic 4G Expansion and 5G Plans in Delhi



According to the BSNL Chairman A. Robert J. Ravi, BSNL is pushing forward with a significant network expansion in Delhi. He informed the media that BSNL has initiated a new tender to deploy up to 10,000 new 4G sites in Delhi. This expansion will utilize an Operational Expenditure (OpEx) model. The Chairman provided an update on BSNL's next-generation services, stating that the 5G network-as-a-service (NaaS) deployment in Delhi, to deliver commercial 5G services early next year. Further elaborating on the OpEx tender for the 10,000 sites, Mr. Ravi explained the shift in procurement strategy. BSNL will not buy the equipment and will keep paying monthly rent for 10 years. This strategic model, BSNL is introducing, if successful, it will put this model across the country. This strategic move aims to accelerate deployment while converting what would be a large capital investment into manageable operational costs.

Important Meeting that IAFI will attend

Meeting	Dates	Submission Dates
ITU-R: Working Party 5C (WP 5C) - Fixed wireless systems, HF systems in the fixed and land mobile services	17th - 28th Nov 2025	05th Nov 2025
ITU-R: ITU-R Working Party 5B	18th - 27th Nov 2025	06th Nov 2025
ITU-R: Working Party 5A (WP 5A) Land mobile service excluding IMT; amateur and amateur-satellite service	19th - 28th Nov 2025	07th Nov 2025
ITU-R: 1st Inter-regional Information Session on WRC-27 Preparation	03rd - 05th Dec 2025	21st Nov 2025
ITU-T: CITS Expert Group on Communications Technology for Automated Driving	19th Dec 2025	07th Dec 2025
APT: The 2nd Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026	28th - 29th Jan 2026	18th Jan 2026
ITU: Collaboration on ITS Communication Standards	16th March 2025	03rd March 2025

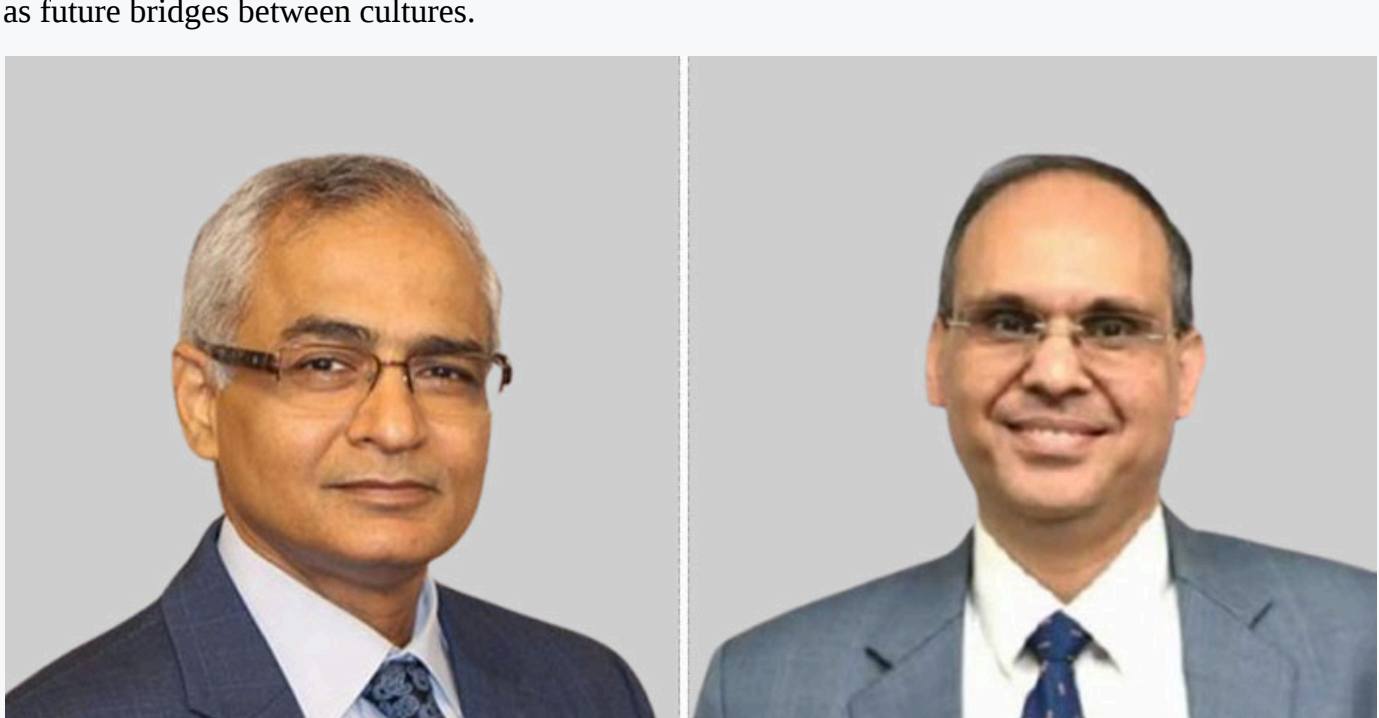
Telecom Stories:



Union Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, on Monday evening, addressed members of the Indian community in Baku, extending warm greetings and appreciating the vibrant gathering of over 1,000 individuals, including professionals from international oil and gas, hospitality, and commodity trading sectors, as well as 380 university students.

The Union MoS commended the community for its unity, as reflected in the establishment of multiple associations such as the Indian Azerbaijani Association, the Azerbaijani Telugu Association, the Baku Tamil Sangham, and the Indian Students Association of Azerbaijan. He noted that the gathering represents the face of a modern, resilient, and ambitious India that is deeply rooted in its heritage despite being thousands of miles away from home.

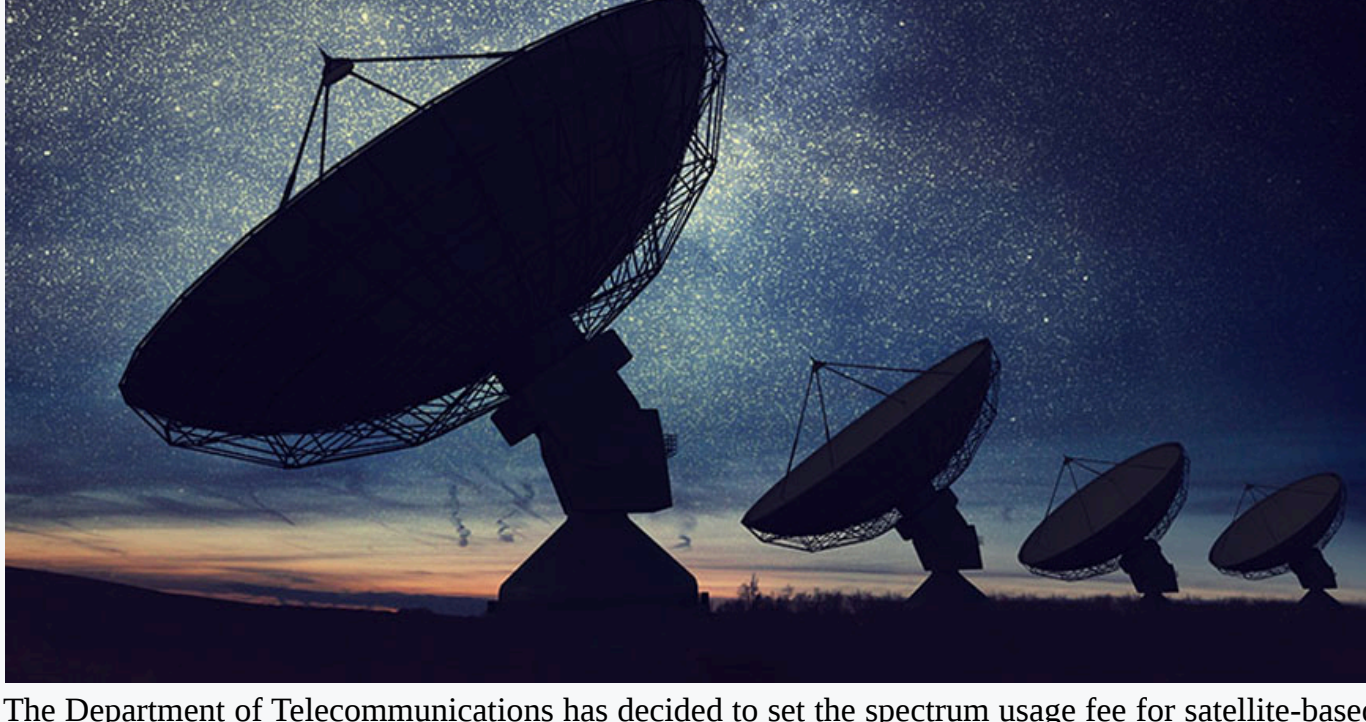
Highlighting the evolving landscape of India, the Union Minister of State underscored the country's progress in digital innovation, renewable energy, space exploration, and economic dynamism. He emphasized that members of the diaspora remain integral to India's journey, stating that their success enhances India's global standing, their investments generate opportunities, and their children serve as future bridges between cultures.



The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has moved Telecom Secretary Neeraj Mittal to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG), appointing him as its new secretary. Mittal replaces Pankaj Jain, who has been shifted to the post of Member Secretary, Eighth Central Pay Commission. Incidentally, Jain's superannuation is scheduled for December 31, 2025.

Amit Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, has been named the new Telecom Secretary, DoT. Agrawal, a 1993-batch IAS officer from the Chhattisgarh cadre, has led the pharma department since December 2024.

Mittal, who took over the telecom portfolio in September 2023, oversaw key developments including progress on India's indigenous telecom technology stack and BSNL's rollout of nearly one lakh 4G sites during his tenure as DoT Secretary and Chair of the Digital Communications Commission.



The Department of Telecommunications has decided to set the spectrum usage fee for satellite-based communication services at 5% of adjusted gross revenue (AGR), revising an earlier recommendation of 4% by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). This policy affects satcom operators such as Starlink, OneWeb, and Amazon Kuiper, as well as any new entrants.

The DoT has referred the matter back to TRAI for further changes, pointing to a need for a simple and auditable pricing model and expressing concerns about the complexity of implementing differentiated charges in urban and rural areas.

Additionally, the DoT rejected a TRAI recommendation to subsidize satellite terminal equipment via the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), stating there is currently no mechanism in the DBN to directly disburse such subsidies. The government aims to prioritize rural and remote connectivity but has chosen not to introduce new direct subsidy channels for terminal costs at this time, instead maintaining DBN funding for ongoing rural broadband projects.

Follow us on:-   

ITU-APT Foundation Of India 504, Fifth Floor World Trade Center (Behind Lalit Hotel)
Barakhamba Road New Delhi- 110001, India.

Contact No.: +91-11-45005163, 7017210403, 9999797700 - Website: iafi.in

If you do not want to receive this mailer, you can [unsubscribe here](#) from our mailing list.